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ABSTRACT

This document contains three papers from a symposium on human resource development (HRD) in the United Kingdom. "Organization Development in the United Kingdom Public Sector" (Darren C. Short) reports the results of a survey of HRD managers working in the UK central government that identified significant organizational development activity within the sector and the factors influencing the nature of the extensive involvement in HRD teams in that organizational development. In "Human Resource Development in the UK: A Partial Exposition" (Monica M. Lee), the changes that have taken place in HRD in the United Kingdom are traced within the context of changes in national and organizational policy and culture, developments in theory, and shifts in personal expectations. In "Human Resource Development in the UK--A Review of the Literature" (Carole Elliot), the positions taken in selected publications that have been identified as being among the influential sources of ideas regarding HRD are examined and it is argued that HRD must retain its interdisciplinary perspective if it is to remain an influential and positive force within all types of organizations. (MN)

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Organization Development in the United Kingdom Public Sector

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Very little has been published about the application of Organization Development in the United Kingdom public sector, or about the involvement of Human Resource Development teams. This article reports the results of a survey of HRD managers working in the UK central government. The findings highlight significant OD activity within the sector and an important level of involvement for internal HRD teams. Questions are raised about the factors influencing the nature of that HRD involvement.

A number of definitions of Human Resource Development (HRD) have placed Organization development (OD) firmly within the field. For example, Swanson, in a paper for the 1995 annual conference of the Academy of HRD, defined HRD as a "a process of developing and/or unleashing human expertise through organization development and personnel training and development for the purpose of improving performance" (Swanson, 1995, p. 1-2). Similarly, in her article for the American Society for Training and Development, McLagan (1989) made the same link when describing HRD as the "integrated use of training and development, organization development, and career development to improve individual, group, and organizational effectiveness" (McLagan, 1989, p. 53). From these definitions, one might expect to find OD work falling within the remit of HRD teams in organizations. To explore this expectation, this paper describes the results of a survey of HRD managers within the British public sector.

Background on OD in the public sector

There are few published accounts of the application of OD within the United Kingdom (UK) public sector: for example, only four such articles appeared during 1994-1996 in the British Journal of Management, Journal of Management Studies, Human Relations, Public Administration Review, Organization Development Journal, and Human Resource Development Quarterly. These four examined the underachievement of organizational change programs in the public sector (Brooks and Bate, 1994), the structural reorganization of British Rail (Pendleton, 1994), factors influencing the outcomes of changes in ownership of public organizations (Parker, 1995), and organizational transformation and top-down change in the National Health Service (Ashburner, Ferlie, & FitzGerald, 1996). None of these four published cases addressed the involvement of HRD teams.

More has been published about the application of OD within the public sector in the United States. For example, Golembiewski, Proehl, and Sink (1981) identified 270 recorded cases of OD application in the public sector over the period 1945 to 1980, and more recently Robertson and Seneviratne (1995) completed a meta-analysis of prior evaluations of 47 published studies into organizational interventions, including 16 from the public sector. These studies both signified the presence of OD in the public sector but without identifying the players involved.

The current literature therefore lacks a description of the application of OD in the UK public sector or of those involved in OD interventions.

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Research questions

Given the lack of published accounts of those involved in public sector OD, particularly in the UK, research was undertaken to determine:

- The involvement of HRD teams in the application of OD techniques in the UK public sector, the nature of that involvement, and the relationship between the role for HRD teams, the size of HRD teams, and the size of the government department or agency;
- Who else, other than HRD teams, apply OD techniques within the UK public sector, and the extent of their involvement;

Methodology

Discussions with the Cabinet Office, a central department with key over-seeing and co-ordinating government responsibilities, determined that HRD policy is chiefly delegated to individual departments and agencies. A questionnaire was therefore designed, with the help of HRD practitioners in four departments and agencies, to address the two research areas. The sampling frame was provided by the Cabinet Office (1997) document *Development and Training for Civil Servants: A Framework for Action*, which listed 73 central government departments and agencies at the time of the survey with at least 300 employees. Of these 73, a list of addresses could only be obtained for 64, and that list contained all but one of the 24 organizations with at least 3500 employees. The questionnaire was mailed out on October 1, 1997 to these 64 departments and agencies either addressed to a named Head of Human Resources or to an un-named Head of Training.

On the advice of the Cabinet Office, the questionnaire was kept deliberately short and easy to complete to encourage response, and therefore concentrated on only ten OD interventions selected to cover the individual, group, and organization levels. For each intervention, respondents were asked to check boxes corresponding to the frequency and nature of the involvement by the department's HRD team. The ten interventions, and their definitions supplied in the questionnaire were:

- *Team building* - helping members of a team to increase their cohesiveness and cooperation.
- *Process improvement* - seeking to make a work process more effective or efficient.
- *Culture transformation* - seeking planned changes to employees' assumptions about the "right" and "wrong" ways of doing things.
- *Strategic planning* - assisting work areas in establishing long-term organizational goals, objectives, and direction.
- *Structural change* - helping managers to alter the structure and responsibilities of component parts of their organization.
- *Training* - designing training which provides individuals with knowledge, skills, or attitudes which may be applied immediately on the job.
- *Counseling/coaching* - designing formal helping relationships in which individuals may relate their problems to sympathetic listeners or be advised how to deal with work or interpersonal problems.
- *Cross-functional training* - providing the knowledge needed by those in work teams to function with another unit or organization.
- *Future search conferences/large-scale technology* - bringing together at least 300 employees from all levels of the organization as part of a rapid change process.
- *Quality circles* - bringing together small groups to identify methods of improving production or to solve work problems.

These ten interventions were selected from a list in Rothwell, Sullivan, and McLean (1995), and definitions were taken from the same source but adapted to fit the UK public sector environment based on pilot study feedback from practitioners. Respondents were also asked to check boxes corresponding best to the extent of involvement in OD interventions within their

department or agency by certain other groups such as external consultants and internal Human Resource Management teams.

Response rate

Of the 64 mailed questionnaires, 23 were returned (including one only partially completed) from organizations whose total workforce was nearly 220 thousand employees. The overall response rate was 36 per cent, and the response rates by organization size were:

Employing 300 - 999:	6 returned out of 20 (30 per cent)
Employing 1,000 - 2,999:	6 returned out of 19 (32 per cent)
Employing 3,000 - 9,999:	8 returned out of 17 (47 per cent)
Employing 10,000 or more:	3 returned out of 8 (38 per cent).

Summary of findings

Finding 1: HRD teams vary in size from fewer than 10 staff to more than 45, with a close relationship between the size of the HRD team and the size of the department or agency. Table 1 shows the size of HRD teams relative to the size of their departments or agencies. Generally, there was a close relationship, with the larger organizations having the largest HRD teams (half of the organizations employing at least 3000 employees had HRD teams with 45 or more staff). Conversely, the smaller departments and agencies had the smallest HRD teams, with just over half of the organizations employing fewer than 3000 having HRD teams with fewer than ten staff.

Table 1
Relationship between organization size and size of HRD team

(Numbers)

Size of department/agency	Size of HRD team			
(number of employees)	Less than 10	10 - 24	25 - 44	45 or more
300 - 999	5	1	0	0
1000 - 2999	1	3	0	1
3000 - 9999	1	3	2	3
10000 and over	0	0	0	3

Finding 2: A wide range of OD interventions occur in the UK public sector, with the most frequent being training, culture transformation, strategic planning, and process improvement. Table 2 shows the frequency with which the ten selected OD interventions were reported as occurring in the responding agencies and departments. Of the ten, only future search conferences were found to be occurring frequently or occasionally in a fewer than half of the organizations. Interventions based on training, team building, process improvement, culture transformation, strategic planning, and structural change were all reported as occurring at least occasionally in most departments. Those interventions occurring frequently were: training (in all of the organizations); culture transformation (in 68% of the organizations); and strategic planning and process improvement (in 59% for both). Quality circles and future search conferences were reported to be occurring the least frequently.

Table 2
Percentage of departments where selected OD interventions occur frequently or occasionally

Intervention type	Interventions occur frequently	Interventions occur at least occasionally
Team building	45	91
Process improvement	59	91
Culture transformation	68	91
Strategic planning	59	91
Structural change	50	86
Training	100	100
Counseling/coaching	41	82
Cross-functional training	36	68
Future search conference	5	27
Quality circles	14	55

Finding 3: HRD units are most likely to have a major role in training, counseling/coaching, and culture transformation, and least likely to have a major role in quality circles, future search conferences, team building, and structural change. Table 3 shows the percentage of departments where frequently-occurring interventions involved HRD as a major player. Training again came out as the main role for HRD with training interventions reported as occurring frequently in all departments and agencies, and HRD teams reported by 91% of organizations as having a major role in those interventions. The HRD role was still substantial, although slightly less important, for culture transformation, where 68% of organizations reported frequent interventions, and 67% of those organizations reported HRD as having a major role. The HRD role was much less for team building and structural change interventions: both were reported as occurring frequently around half of the departments and agencies, with only 10% of those organizations reporting a major role for HRD in team building and 18% in structural change interventions.

Table 3
Percentage of departments where frequently-occurring interventions involved HRD as the major player

Intervention type	Primary/major role for HRD
Team building	10
Process improvement	54
Culture transformation	67
Strategic planning	38
Structural change	18
Training	91
Counseling/coaching	67
Cross-functional training	38
Future search conference	0
Quality circles	0

Finding 4: There is little relationship between the size of HRD teams and the variety of OD work they undertake. An analysis of the survey results showed little difference between the nature of major OD involvement of small, medium, and large HRD teams: for example, all were similarly involved in training and culture transformation interventions. The only notable difference was the lack of frequent major involvement by any of the medium-sized HRD teams in strategic planning and process improvement, where-as around a third of small and large HRD teams were frequent major players in strategic planning interventions and around half in process improvement interventions.

Finding 5: HRD teams are one of a large number of groups applying OD techniques in the UK public sector. Table 4 shows the involvement of groups other than HRD in the ten selected OD interventions. External consultants, for example, were reported as being used for OD interventions by 91% of departments and agencies on either an occasional or frequent basis. Internal groups were also being used, including internal trainers and OD specialists based outside of HRD teams, Human Resource Management, and specialist strategic planning units. An analysis of these groups against organizational size showed no relationship: i.e. the smaller organizations were just as likely as the larger ones to be using external consultants and to have internal trainers outside of HRD.

Table 4
Percentage of departments where groups other than HRD units are involved in OD interventions

Group	Involved frequently	Involved occasionally
Departmental trainers based outside HRD/Training unit	22	39
Departmental OD teams based outside HRD/ Training unit	22	43
Human Resource Management, or similar	35	26
Strategic planning units, or similar	9	39
Efficiency units, or similar	13	26
Quality divisions, or similar	13	9
External consultants	26	65

Discussion of findings

The survey results showed OD interventions in the UK public sector to be far more common and varied than the scarcity of published accounts would otherwise suggest. Interventions appear to be common at the individual level (through training and counseling/ coaching), team level (through team building and process consultation), and organizational level (through culture transformation, strategic planning, and structural change). The survey results also highlighted the importance of the OD role played by internal HRD teams. Although such teams can vary in size from less than 10 to more than 45 staff, most are involved in a wide variety of OD interventions. This suggests that the size of the larger HRD teams does not necessarily reflect a wider range of OD activity compared with their smaller counterparts, but could simply reflect more frequent application of the same interventions.

The survey results raised interesting questions about why HRD teams are more active in certain types of OD interventions. The name given to some internal HRD teams, *Training and Development*, suggests a likely bias towards training interventions, and this is reflected in part by the survey results. The minority role for HRD teams in structural change and, to a lesser extent, strategic planning, suggests that some HRD teams may be less active in those interventions

involving less up-front training. Any general move away from direct training in organizations would therefore threaten these teams.

The survey results also showed that, for interventions where internal HRD teams are not major players, a number of other groups take the lead, including external consultants, internal trainers and OD specialists based outside of HRD, Human Resource Management and specialist strategic planning units. The large number, and wide variety, of other OD providers raises the issue of where responsibility should lie for OD strategies and the co-ordination of OD activities. A broad view of the HRD field, as taken by Swanson (1995) and McLagan (1989), would suggest an important strategic role for HRD teams within OD, although such a step could run counter to traditional views of the role of the teams.

Research implications

If OD interventions are as common in the public sector as the results of this survey suggest, then it opens up several avenues for further research, such as exploring the success rate of interventions in that sector compared to the private sector, or how interventions common in the private sector have been adapted to suit public sector culture. It also suggests the need for a means of sharing OD practice between public sector practitioners. The nature of the involvement of internal HRD teams in OD interventions also raises further potential research questions on the factors that dictate their current role, how that role could be changed to provide a greater involvement across the wide range of OD interventions, how HRD teams could become more involved in OD strategy, and what the implications of a greater OD role would be on the structure and staffing of the teams.

Conclusions

This survey provided a first glimpse into the application of OD techniques in the UK public sector. It highlighted the significant level of OD application in the sector and the important role for HRD teams in many OD interventions, particularly those involving training, culture transformation, and counseling/coaching. Several other groups were also identified as active in OD interventions, including external consultants and internal trainers and OD units based outside of HRD teams. From analyzing the survey results, questions emerged about why HRD teams are more active in certain interventions than others and what effect the traditional training role of these teams has had on the nature of their current OD involvement. These questions lead on to discussions of how internal HRD teams could expand their OD role and their involvement in public sector OD strategy, and these discussions would benefit from being based on the results of further research.

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Human Resource Development in the UK: A Partial Exposition.

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'HRD' in the UK is presented as diverse and in a state of flux. This partial view is derived from examining the way in which 'HRD' in the UK has changed over the years, taken alongside changes in the national and organisational policy and culture, developments in theory, and shifts in personal expectations.

'Every few hundred years throughout Western history, a sharp transformation has occurred. In a matter of decades, society altogether rearranges itself - its worldview, its basic values, its social and political structures, its arts, its key institutions. Fifty years later a new world exists' (Drucker 1992).

This paper presents a 'partial' view of HRD in the UK. It is a view that I am naturally partial to, I am biased towards it, it serves my purposes, and so on. It is also a view that does not claim to be the whole truth, or even any part of the 'truth'. It is a partial account recited by one person. I am building on partiality by drawing upon thoughts put forward in Stead & Lee (1996), who compared development of HRD in Western and Central Europe. If we can persuade others to believe it, then we might start to create a 'truth' – together we might say 'this is what happened... this is why it happened... and this is what it means...'. If enough people become partial to a view then we write history and our view becomes the 'truth'. I suggest that our current view of HRD and our anticipation of its future profile is a function of our partiality.

In the UK, HRD is seen as a relatively young and predominantly Western concept which has emerged from management and development thinking, and has been shaped by values and events as Europe has transformed over the last 50 years. This view is based on the argument that as one era presents a need, ideas and solutions are created to meet that need, which create a new approach and perspective (Lessem 1986, Kinsman 1990, Pedlar et al. 1991). As the new approach develops, further needs come to light which call for a new perspective, leading to the creation of ideas and solutions in order to develop. It is interesting to note that according to Pedlar et al, this assumption about HRD is in itself a product of its era, mirroring current thinking that learning organisations must evolve, adapt and transform to develop and survive (Peters & Waterman 1982, Pedlar et al. 1991, Senge 1990, Argyris & Schon 1978). In the remainder of this paper I shall discuss HRD in the UK by examining its development and the trends within this.

The Post War Years. Following the Second World War each nation in Europe focused upon basic needs of securing shelter, safety, food and warmth, as Europe faced the challenge of restabilising and rebuilding social, economic and political structures. The defeat of fascism heralded a political trend to the left concerned with restabilisation and the rebuilding of national economies within a democratic framework, following a model of programmes of nationalisation and welfare systems. Although individual countries within Western Europe were primarily occupied with regaining their own stability, the consequences of war also called for strategic planning and policy making at a European level to safeguard economic stability, human rights and future protection of its citizens. To these ends the Charter of the United Nations, chiefly aimed at gaining access for participants in world markets, was drafted and the horrific revelations of the concentration camps led to the European Convention of Human Rights 1950 (Story 1993). The iron grip of Stalin's rule in the Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe led to increased tension which developed into the cold war encouraging Western Europe to close ranks, thus sowing the seeds of the European Community (Laqueur 1992).

Organisations had the same needs as the nations and their individuals. Industry had been geared completely towards the war effort and faced repairing wholescale destruction of major

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cities, bridges and transport routes. Organisational structures characterised by central control and lack of individual autonomy were adopted. This suited the systematic rationality of scientific management, and also gave credence to what MacGregor (1960) saw as the traditional understanding of human nature. Known as Theory X this concept maintains that the workforce wish to avoid responsibility and need to be firmly controlled and directed by management. In Western Europe this led to tight top down management structures with decision-making firmly in the hands of directors and chief executives. Efficiency was measured and monitored by time and motion studies, and payment by results systems were established in the belief that individuals are best motivated by financial reward (Huczynski & Buchanan 1991). Typical structures resembled Mintzberg's notion of the machine bureaucracy where the focus is a pull towards standardisation and control through formal rules and regulation from a central authority (Mintzberg 1983).

Management thinking at the time emphasised a systematic, ordered and planned approach to training and development as the way to rebuild, restabilise and remobilize the workforce. This approach is best characterised by the Weberian premise of control through authority (which reinforced national governments power base) and Taylor's scientific concept of management (which assumed economic reward as the best motivator) (Weber 1943, Taylor 1947). So immediately post-war, the picture in the UK is one of focused national strategy, tight organisational structures and hardworking individuals preoccupied with regaining stability. The nation was united at national, organisational and individual levels in regaining stability and social care; the focus was clearly on the management of human resources rather than development.

The 1950s to 1960s. The fifties saw little unemployment, better housing and healthcare, comprehensive welfare systems and increasing demand for labour. The death of Stalin in 1953 kindled hope in Western Europe that the Cold War might end. As it became clear that this was not so, attempts to establish a more united Europe brought a liaison between West Germany, France, Italy and Benelux in 1958, with de Gaulle refusing entry to Britain. By 1960 Western Europe was enjoying a time of economic prosperity, with the economic boom (Wirtschaftswunder), of West Germany and strong growth in Britain, Italy and France. However, the sixties heralded major changes and a questioning of political power structures.

By the late sixties there was major unrest throughout Western Europe. Britain underwent a series of economic crises and saw the onset of civil unrest in Northern Ireland. In 1968 French students were demonstrating in Paris which led to massive anti-government protest marches in Paris. Student demonstrations were held in West Germany, Italy and Spain and anti-nuclear protests in Britain. Increasing concern about Soviet power, the consequences of the Vietnam war and the movement of nuclear missiles engendered a mood of dissatisfaction which brought about an upsurge in new parties and movements concerned with peace and the environment, and a move away from the consumer society (Lane & Ersson 1987). Traditional perceptions of the world were challenged further by, amongst other things, watching the first steps of man on the moon, by the advancement of technology in the home and at work, by the coming together of a European community and the possibility of a borderless world (Ohmae 1992).

In Western Europe the rational and systematic development of human resources had worked well, and provided low unemployment, and skilled workforces who enjoyed the benefits of comprehensive welfare systems. The scientific concept of management expanded in organisations with the development and delineation of functions such as marketing, finance and operations research with a focus on systematic job analysis (Lee 1996). In Britain the implementation of the Industrial Training Act in 1964 led to systematic training of the workforce in job specific skills, with management ordering and planning this process within functional systems (Pedlar et al. 1991). This was reinforced by the rising number of professional bodies, each guarding their own, at times very small, patch. HR bodies included the Institute of Training and Development (ITD), and the Institute of Personnel Management (IPM). This approach appeared to be satisfactory at national level, but organisations and individuals were less happy (Laqueur 1992). Specific skill development led to highly trained workforces, and well-regulated professional bodies, but also led to a labour force of isolated individuals with little understanding or ability to transfer learning and to work cross-functionally (Argyris & Schon 1978). Using Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman's

(1959) analysis, made at the time, the basic hygiene factors had been addressed nationally, and were being replaced by the need to achieve, and to gain recognition and personal advancement.

Organisations as well as individuals were turning their attention to ways in which they could move on from the process of settling and stabilising to further development and achievement. In his Theory Y, MacGregor argued that by satisfying the basic needs of employees through reward and incentives, management could no longer use these methods to exert control. He felt that the time had come for a new approach which would aim to satisfy the self actualising needs of the workforce, 'new theory, changed assumptions, more understanding of the nature of human behaviour in organisational settings' (MacGregor 1960). During this period, therefore, we can see an increasing distinction between a standardising National approach to HR; the development of fossilising organisational theory that placed HRD as a subset of HRM as an organisational function, the importance in power of professional bodies, and at the same time, an increasing focus on organisational growth and individual self-development.

The 1970s to mid 1980s. Between 1973 and 1976 Greece, Portugal and Spain had established democratic systems in place of authoritarian regimes. Oil prices increased and the growing pace of technology put severe strain on traditional heavy industry. Economic recession spread in the seventies and continued into the early eighties. There was continued social disorder with the rise of terrorism and unrest in West Germany, Italy, Spain and Northern Ireland. Along with the recession and energy crises came a recognition of the consequences of the consumer society and industrial age, typified by the green movement in West Germany and a backlash against NATO's decision to install intermediate nuclear missiles in Western Europe. The decision to co-ordinate West European foreign policy (D'Avignon report in 1970), brought renewed interest in the move towards European unity, and the fall of deGaulle brought Britain back into the frame.

Economic crisis and dissatisfaction at governments called for greater public autonomy at regional and local level. In Britain where the recession was particularly severe, the election of Thatcher in 1979 to Prime Minister heralded major changes with the onset of a programme of privatising nationalised industries, reduction in public expenditure and a move towards service rather than heavy industry. Leisure and tourism expanded throughout Western Europe, along with high levels of unemployment. The mid eighties brought greater economic stability. In 1986 the Single European Act brought fresh commitment to the European community, with the aim of establishing a borderless internal market with the free movement of goods, people, and services, and the establishment of a unified monetary system and social legislation by 1992.

Mintzberg (1973) suggested that management could not be bound by a set of scientific statements and programmes, and that the true nature of managerial work was fragmentary characterised by horizontal networking, organisational monitoring and broad decision making rather than pure functional control. The notion of excellent organisations seemed to fit the mood and to offer solutions at national, organisational and individual levels, in its exhortation of leaner, flatter organisations, and uncluttered lines of communication. Organisations were encouraged to clarify their value base with mission statements and adopt bottom up development strategies with a focus on customer needs and care. Peters & Waterman (1982), developed their concept of the excellent company exhorting organisations to recognise that "people - not money, machines or minds - as the natural resource may be the key to it all.". Handy (1976), offered new perspectives on understanding organisations, demanding that the advent of computer communication technology called for new integrated structures and questioned ownership in the context of organisations stating that "the fruits of success belong in a sense to all the interested parties."

The wide diversity of approach that characterises UK HRD started to become evident. At national and organisational levels, economic recession called for greater efficiency, increase profit and productivity while retaining a tight control on public spending. With the decline in manufacturing and heavy industry and a growth in service industry there was a need to pare down the workforce to economise, and provide multi-skilled workers, who could work across functions and fill a variety of roles. There was, therefore, a need to introduce strategies and provision which would meet the developing needs of organisations in the age of advancing technology. At the same time, in all but the large yet-to-be-privatised organisations, there was a move away from in-house training, towards the buying in of ready-skilled labour. Individuals became important stakeholders

in their own development, and in finding their voice, demanded work that brought personal recognition and responsibility and, opportunities for achievement and self fulfilment. Management education boomed and companies wanted to be a part of this, with a surge in M.B.A. programmes, internal and external management development programmes and a proliferation of outdoor training activities. A more flexible view of organisational theory and the role of HRM (and thus HRD) was at the forefront of new thinking, and incorporated notions of self development (Pedlar et al 1978), creative and lateral thinking (de Bono, 1970), action learning (Revans 1980), organisational development (Handy 1976, Argyris & Schon 1978), and quality management (Peters & Waterman 1982).

The multiplicity of ideas of the seventies and eighties brought about enormous organisational confusion and a piecemeal approach to HRD in which each faction offered its own panacea to the 'ills' of whatever the chosen target group was. The 'market' was flooded and confused, with little or no integration between large-scale systems of HRD (still evident in the large organisations and public utilities), a plethora of providers (ranging from practitioner-alienating formal higher education qualification systems to unregulated purveyors of theoretically bankrupt 'experiences'), and individual 'solutions' such as the search for professional recognition, self development and action learning. The underlying survival values of national and organisational strategies encouraged a win-lose mentality which was totally at odds with the win-win values of self development. Both seemed at odds with the external environment, which demanded global vision, expanding networks and environmental awareness. This conflict of values coupled with the speeding pace of change led to a dizzying sense of shock and of not being able to keep up (Toffler 1970).

One constant within this confusion was the increasing realisation in the world of practice, that theoreticians might be right in their focus upon the link between developing people and organisational and national progress. This was reinforced by the vision of 'an educated, trained and flexible labour force' as described in the government white paper 'A New Training Initiative' (MSC 1981). This document spelled out measures to skill up the workforce and was targeted at widening opportunities for young people and for adults, as 'The nature of the technological changes now being implemented throughout the world, the emergence of the newly industrialised countries, the redistribution of manufacturing capacity world-wide all mean that we have entered a period of rapid and far-reaching transition.' It suggested a national system of vocational education and training aiming to span across all professions with the introduction of agreed national standards of competence. By the end of this period the process of consultation, about what for many was seen as a major re-writing of HR in the UK, had started, and the development of human resources had become a recognised need by the end of this period, the focus remained isolated within different groupings and mainly aligned to the British Thatcherite years of 'each man for himself' (it was a time of sexism).

The mid 1980s to mid 1990s. Deregulation policies in the main industrial countries and the opening of European borders as a result of the Single European Act (SEA 1986) stimulated the economies of Western Europe and from the mid to late eighties it enjoyed a period of economic growth. Although the profitable days of traditional industry such as textiles, iron and steel were still in decline, the service sector continued to bloom. Unemployment remained high and seemed to have become a permanent feature of West European life. Progress in the eighties towards a unified European community was slow and troubled by setbacks. The crumbling of the East bloc in 1989-90 and the increased chances of a unified Germany grasped Western Europe's attention, and help in enabling the new Central Eastern Europe to make the transition to a new way of life became top priority. The collapse of the Soviet Empire coincided with economic depression throughout the West. The increased pressure of pumping economic and knowledge aid into Eastern Europe lent greater importance to European unity in terms of trade and security. With the end of the Cold War and demilitarisation of the Soviet Union the economic, military, political and social map of Europe had shifted with Germany becoming Europe's largest and most powerful member state virtually overnight. The eruption of disorder in Yugoslavia brought further pressure. In 1992, the Maastricht Treaty was drawn up with the main aims of maintaining European unity, internal markets and common foreign and security policy and achieving monetary union within a

European system of Central Banks by 1997-9. The forming of the Maastricht Treaty outlined a new Europe and the implications of the changes caused political stirrings and national concerns of lost identity leading to modifications which recognised individual nation's rights and ways of life. The dismantling of the communist Eastern bloc, the increased dissolution of geographical boundaries, the information and technology boom, the industrial recession, the advent of green consciousness, led to a re-examination of world view and move towards of integration.

Writers such as Handy (1994), Morgan (1986) and Senge (1990) voiced the need for individual and organisational adaptability and flexibility, and in the mid to late eighties two major strands of thinking emerged - Total Quality Management and Organisational Transformation. Japan provided inspiration for Total Quality Management where efficiency, quality and individual achievement combined to provide high profit. In his work 'Thriving on Chaos' (1987), Peters suggested that those who were striving for excellence were companies who sought constant improvement in the face of constant change. Deming argued that quality is to do with co-operation not competition and that management's role was to generate the climate for this (Pickard 1992).

The concept of TQM acknowledged the need for strategic process rather than quick fixes by aiming to respond to the challenges and changes of the external environment through creating systems which would be both profit and needs driven. The dual approach of creating fit lean structures and systems to maximise profit with the establishment of a continuous learning environment was believed to lead to a win-win formula benefiting national, organisational and individual needs levels. The need to develop, adapt and grow with change rather than react to it also gave birth to the idea of organisational transformation and growing interest in the Learning Company concept. Owen's definition of transformation as the shift from one stage of existence to another which is entirely different, is particularly in keeping with the era (Owen 1987). Senge added to the idea of organisational transformation by urging a shift from thinking of the world as the creation of 'separate, unrelated forces', to a view of the world as an integrated whole with its web of interconnections (Senge 1990). Pedlar et al (1991) integrated the concept of transformation into their vision of the Learning Company as a strategy for sustainable development. They view members of the learning company to include employees and employers, shareholders and customers, suppliers and even competitors, the environment and the community, and suggest that 'learning' is not confined to formal situations but is a continual lifetime process.

The 'visionary' nature of these notions, and the apparent practical advantages of TQM and its clones, meant that discussion and practice of HRD in the UK was starting to accommodate the role played by HR in reinforcing organisational and national strategy. The gradual (and stormy) establishment of the system of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ's) was a prime example of the link between HR systems and strategy. This slowly started to operate in the early 1990s, following intensive discussion among the stakeholders (academics, providers, corporations, professions and individuals) about the nature of, and competencies (against which candidates could be measured) in their area of expertise. Similarly intense discussion was also occurring about the implications these moves had for education, the country, individuals, and the areas of study and practice themselves. During this time the ITD and IPM merged to form the Institute of Personnel Development (IPD). This merger was a good illustration of the 'desire for integration' prevalent across the UK. It also reflected the increasing unease that theoreticians and practitioners had with the difficult-to-sustain historical dichotomy between HRD and HRM. Further, the problems encountered in trying to manage the different entrance criteria, membership levels, educational aspirations and professional expectations provided a graphic illustration of similar problems being encountered nationally with the establishment of NVQ's.

In theory the mandate to provide 'lifetime' training and development opportunities associated with the NVQ system fits neatly with the idea of transformation. It recognises the organisational concerns of unrealised potential and the need for a strategy encompassing continuous learning through schemes such as Investors in People, and it also acknowledges the need of the individual to achieve and that 'the conscious development of people and organisations have a part to play.' (Lessem 1986). In practice, the introduction of national standards arrived at by a process of functional analysis raised concern that this approach had more in common with the systematic development exhorted by the principles of scientific management in the 1950s rather

than humanist principles of integration (Burgoyne 1989, 1990), and that diverse national needs and flexibility might be sacrificed to standardised procedures (Porter & McKibben 1988).

At the same time as the government was forcing adoption of a national system of NVQ's through preferential financial packages and extensive promotion a raft of interested parties formed sub-groups. One example of an interested-party sub-group is that of the University Forum for HRD. The University's involved in the Forum already used two different (and apparently mutually exclusive) systems of assessment, and the 'competency movement' incorporated a third. The initial focus of the forum was therefore to (attempt to) integrate the qualification systems. This task, however, necessarily involved searching for a shared understanding of the theory and practice of HRD. The complexity (and impossibility?) of this, led to the permanent establishment and research focus of the Forum. The system of NVQ's is intended to cover all sectors and activities, and many other sub-groups have been formed. At the close of this period there were a wide range of different understandings of HRD (Lee 1997a), a range of different providers, a range of different stakeholders and needs, and the reasonably firm establishment of a national system that, despite being criticised by almost all parties, provided some coherence, and by its presence, fostered (belatedly?) the sort of fundamental debate that is often missing as a culture blindly develops.

Mid 1990s to fin-de-cycle. Labour achieved a landslide victory in 1997 which made crystal clear the culmination of gradual shifts in public aspirations. Previously, the UK was rocked by several food scares (salmonella in eggs, BSE in beef, Ecoli in prepared foods) each of which turned into political problems for the Conservatives, accompanied as they were with accusations of a potentially disastrous lowering of health standards, paucity of inspection processes, and misleading the public. What felt like an ever increasing number of financial and 'private' scandals, misuses of power, and other irregularities involving Conservative ministers gradually came to light and were particularly damaging because of the Conservatives election rhetoric promising a return to 'traditional family values'. In what was seen by many to be a piece of deliberate political manipulation and mis-information, the Conservatives appeared to try and use the wider European anti-British-food backlash (caused by health fears) and the all-pull-together bonding experienced during the Second World War (using sports fixtures against Germany) as a mechanism for increasing xenophobia, and thereby their own support. If this had been deliberate, then they badly underestimated the speed and nature of the changing culture of the UK. The Press and the general public reacted against the xenophobic messages and rejected the position of their own government in favour of developing more fellow feeling towards other Europeans.

The Labour landslide victory was won, at least partially, on messages of a 'new' nation – one with increased globalisation and representation, and on the renewal of social structures (particularly education and health). Labour appeared to promise a society in which individuals were cared for and supported in their choices, which was environmentally aware and responsible, in which honesty, the right to work and freedom of speech were to be of greater value than a reduction in tax or rampant free market profiteering. At the time of writing, it is unclear whether they will be able to enact all the apparent promises, though they have already been highly pro-active in devolution, education and health, and in setting the bases for a full overhaul of the social systems. They have also addressed the 'right to work', introducing structures and additional funding to facilitate the training and development of the totality of the workforce.

Organisations had also become disillusioned with the promise of the free-market, and overtaken with concerns on how to manage international competition and change, found themselves juggling the need for long term strategies with short term crisis management. Battling at the front line for survival in a constantly changing environment while attempting to meet developmental needs and environmental concerns through strategic planning called for a change in perspective and a way of managing in a world full of paradox (Davis 1990, Handy 1994, Senge 1990). They also backed (almost unanimously) the change to a government that promised islands of stability in the competitive market place, supporting situated enterprise and demonstrating their understanding of the importance of developing HR for organisational longevity.

In the last few years, therefore, growing concern about societal, environmental and technological changes culminated in a dramatic change of government to one in which the continuous development of 'human resources' was stated as a central strategic plank of

government policy. In addition, this policy, which is essentially a proclamation of strategic HR (Lee 1997b), appears to have had the almost unanimous backing of large and small organisations, providers and individuals.

Forms of HR and Motivation. Whilst there has been debate about the details of Maslow's theory of motivation in its use as a universal concept, and in its hierarchical format (Hodgetts & Luthans 1991; Hofstede 1991), there is general acceptance of its overall structure, and therefore Stead & Lee (1996) suggest that it is appropriate to use changes in motivation, as described by Maslow, to illustrate one of the post-war trends in HRD in the UK. Immediately post-war, the developmental aspect of HRD did not exist as we know it now – then, the focus was on meeting the need for security and safety through focused national strategy and tight organisational structures, in which individual development was unregarded. During the 1950s and 1960s these concerns shifted to a national examination of the UK's relationship with the rest of Europe, to an organisational realisation of a competitive society, and an individual realisation of social class, and for all, the idea that achievement through shared responsibility was more fulfilling than financial incentive – in other words, the focus shifted to Maslow's 'social needs'. This corresponded with a desire for classification (knowing where we are) that became HR'M' to a desire for self-expression and self development (discovering where we might go) that became HR'D'. The 1970s and 1980s marked the shift from 'social needs' to the era of the status symbol and the free-market - the creation and meeting of 'esteem needs'. During the height of this period, nation, organisation and individual all appeared to adopt the rhetoric and stance of the entrepreneur. HR was about developing personal and organisational strategies for success, SWOT analyses and the achievement of 'excellence'. HR was now HRs (or HRS, depending upon how loudly you shouted!). Each of these propounded strategies for success assumed that the environment was controllable, and could be manipulated appropriately if the right tools were applied (in the same way that Maslow's need for esteem assumes that the needs for security and safety are already met). In the UK the 1990s brought the realisation that the environment was far-from-equilibrium (Lee & Flatau 1996) and uncontrollable, and that HR was central to any relationship (whether synergistic or competitive, Lee 1998) with the wider world, thus working with HR was a strategic act – leading to suggestions that SHR is substantially different from HRS, and that the SHR practitioner is most appropriately seen as a senior change agent.

Forms of HR and cohesion. In the account given above it is apparent that there are a range of stakeholders in HRD in the UK, and that cohesion of view and approach to HR across these stakeholders has varied over time. There have been three periods (post war structuralisation, free market entrepreneurialism and the new Labour re-socialisation) during which all parties have cohered behind or colluded with, a vision of the nation. In each case, this vision has been tied to a vision of how people should be developed and managed. The three coherent views of HR have, however, differed in their coherence – in the first it was assumed that all people should be taught and rewarded alike, a unitary view of people. In the second, it was assumed that all people were similar in their desire for expression, but that the focus of this might vary from person to person. In the third it is assumed that all people aspire similarly to the vision of a caring, sharing and prosperous society, but that individuals will have different desires, and can and should be treated differently. Around each of these periods of coherence have been others, in which the stakeholders have sought different objectives and have adopted different views of society and HR, and each of these remains to this day – national structures of academic qualification alongside national structures of competency; organisational/in house structures of competency alongside (and working with) sub-contracted providers and university provision; individual development from the skills to the spiritual, and so on. Following recent debates, it might be expected that the various groups are working towards integration, however, whilst a range of integrative initiatives have taken place, the main benefit seems to be a realisation that alongside confusion (and at times, chaos) there is also strength and flexibility in the diverse profile of HR activities and understandings that can be found in the UK at present... however, as a Brit attempting to put forward my own interpretation of events – I am, just possibly, a little partial.

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Human Resource Development in the UK - a review of the literature

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This paper takes as its focus an examination of the position selected texts take in acknowledging the multiplicity of individual identities. The texts chosen represent some of the influential sources of ideas upon HRD in the UK, but constitute a very personal choice, and therefore serve partly to reveal the author's own views and beliefs in the nature of HRD. The notion of human 'becomings' is introduced as a way to make sense of multiple identities and it is argued that HRD must retain its interdisciplinary perspective in order to remain an influential and positive force within all types of organisation.

When I was first asked to write a literature review of texts influential upon Human Resource Development in the UK I was faced by a number of dilemmas. The first of those dilemmas centres upon the difficulty I have in working to the concept of Human Resource Development (HRD). This is probably better explained by my concern that my understanding of HRD is likely to be different from anyone else's, and that because of this others in turn will not understand my understanding. As Monica Lee suggests (Lee, 1997), when trying to understand the word 'development' alone, much confusion arises because the different interpretations of this word (Lee outlines four interpretations: as a maturation process; as a shaping process; as a voyage of exploration and as emergent), are 'associated with a distinct value-base and view of 'life". Equally, my understanding of what is meant by 'Human Resources' is likely to differ from any one else's due to my own value base and view of life. The combination of these three words into the term Human Resource Development simply adds to the confusion and results in a variety of interpretations. These range from those that have their value base rooted in the philosophy of scientific management, to those whose philosophical underpinning is influenced by postmodern and/or poststructuralist interpretations of the world with its attendant view of the death of the 'subject'.

Another dilemma relates to the fact that "HRD is a relatively new concept which has yet to become fully established and accepted, either within professional practice or as a focus of academic enquiry" (Stewart & McGoldrick 1996: 1). As such, there are no shibboleths of HRD, no pillars of seminal texts which I could quickly look up to and declare with certainty that these are *the* texts which have been influential in shaping HRD theory and practice in the UK. The picture is much more undefined than that, consisting of many fuzzy and indistinct areas with no recognisable boundaries. This lack of distinctiveness can, of course, be frustrating - especially when attempting to describe concisely what HRD 'is' to interested enquirers from outside the field. My own view is that it is this very lack of boundaries, HRD's 'newness', which make it such an exciting field within which to work and write thereby giving it a distinction of its own. My own perception of the interdisciplinary nature of the field will become apparent as the course of this paper unfolds, but suffice it to say at this point that Human Resource Development does not limit itself to 'managerialist' literature or that rooted in the predominantly short-term functionalism of training. HRD has evolved, and been shaped by, nations' values and events (Stead & Lee 1996), and as such its future make-up and direction will also be shaped by values and events which we (as humans), subsequently seek to make sense of through the social sciences, the arts and humanities and processes as explained within the natural sciences.

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By giving you - the reader - an account of my confusions as a writer in approaching the composition of this paper, *you* will have reached your own understanding of *my* confusions. My reason for relating the angst I experienced is partly to serve as an exemplar of how my understanding of HRD has developed. In short, my view of HRD has not been a linear, rational process. My interest and research in the HRD field has been influenced and shaped by my own psychological make-up, as formed through genetic and social processes. Please note here that is not my intention to enter the 'nature versus nurture' debate on human development, merely to demonstrate my belief that one's *self* is a complex whole, influenced by many processes - both *in*ternal and *ex*ternal (see Sawday 1997, for a discussion of the rise of the notion of corporeality and embodiment in the 17th century). Given this background, the literature review I offer to you in this paper concerning HRD in the UK is necessarily a partial one. It is my interpretation of aspects of texts, which interest me. Aspects and concepts that I believe need to be addressed in order that my vision of HRD may come to fruition. Such an (ambitious) undertaking contains biases and idiosyncrasies, which even if I was able to (and I don't believe I am), I do not wish to eliminate. As such, this review is somewhat self-indulgent, and maintaining the paper's hitherto focus on my*self* will take as its conceptual thread the shaping of individual identity. That is, to what extent do texts relevant to HRD in the UK context acknowledge how the shaping of individual identity is influenced by, and is influential upon, strategic HRD processes?

Identity and Human *Becomings*

> For human beings are the kinds of creatures who have no universal ontology, no essence whether this be spiritual or genetic. Our ontology is historical: it is both temporal and spatial. What humans are - perhaps better, what human beings are capable of, what we can do - is variable, historical, situational - not an originary 'being' but a mobile 'becoming'. (Rose, 1997: 234)

Rose's quotation is taken from a chapter in which he charts the development of what he terms the 'psy sciences' (for example: psychology, psychiatry, psychotherapy), which form part of the process of individualism, generally acknowledged to have begun during the Enlightenment in the 17th century. Rose's argument is informed by the work of Foucault who argued that "contrary to the claims of its champions and to customary understanding - (the Enlightenment was) not an emancipation from social fetters but the very means by which the state locked subjects into bureaucratic and administrative systems, by stamping them with a clear and distinct *identity* (my emphasis) (Porter 1997: 11). From this standpoint therefore, Rose's view is that these 'psy sciences' subject the individual to normalization - "our prized individuality is truly a tool of social control" (ibid). However, what this quotation also serves to illustrate is the idea that human beings are not static, independent entities. I, for example, am a very different person now from the one I was at the age of ten, both in terms of physical and psychological make-up. To replace the term human beings with human 'becomings' immediately dislocates our day-to-day, taken-for-granted perception of ourselves and others, creating a much more powerful image of the shaping of individual identity. A human who is constantly 'becoming' is also one subject to many influential processes, whether these be - to name but a few - social, political, historical or economic. Consequently, a human *becoming* is a fragile entity, which when grounded in the organisational world becomes infinitely complex, displaying multiple identities. By taking a view of HRD from the perspective of human *becomings*, we can gain insights into HRD as a strategic process concerned with the sustainability of all types of organisation.

It is therefore from this perspective - the view of human beings as human *becomings*, correspondingly acknowledging multiple individual identities - that I will now begin an exploration of literature, which is influencing HRD in the UK.

Influences upon HRD in the UK

I take as my starting point for this exploration the end of World War II. We can see at that time, broadly speaking, hierarchically structured organisations, ordered and based on Taylor's scientific principles of organisation and management. Both national and organisational needs at that time were focused on increasing production and restabalising industry as quickly as possible. The immediate post-war approach to training and development 'emphasised a systematic, ordered and planned approach' (Stead & Lee 1996: 51). In terms of the motivation of employees, the underlying assumption held that individuals were motivated by financial reward and a straightforward rational approach. The need for post-war stability required the rapid re-skilling of the workforce, but little was done to educate managers in a hierarchical model, which emphasised control from the top. According to Cox and Cooper's 1988 study of management students, attitudes towards managerial work appeared to have changed little. Their study demonstrated that there continued to exist the belief that managers have 'a right to manage ... the right to order about another part (of the community) who then do as they are told' (Cox and Cooper quoted in Williams 1996: 262). This suggests a perception of the manager as 'expert' who required no further education and development to assist him/her in his/her work role. However, the dearth of management education programmes up until the early 1990's in Britain had become a concern. In 1987 two reports were produced, one by Charles Handy, the other by Constable & McCormick for the Institute of Management. Both highlighted that managers in Britain 'lack the development, education and training opportunities of their competitors' (Institute of Management 1987: 3). There followed a rapid increase in management education provision in the UK with the majority of business and management schools offering both full-time and part-time MBA courses - based on the US model. However, the type of provision offered has been increasingly criticised since the early 1990's (Alvesson & Wilmott 1992, 1996; French & Grey 1996).

I give a brief outline of the development of management education for the reason that the founder of Action Learning - Reg Revans - was making similar criticisms in the 1960's towards management education expressed now. His sceptical view of the relevance and effectiveness of management education programmes was based on his philosophy that people can learn as much from each other, as they can from the notional expert (Revans, 1980). Revans' work on the development of action learning began in the newly nationalised coal board in 1946. Just at the time that the majority of organisations' training and development needs were being supplied by systematic training, Revans was working with mining students and formulating his belief that they could learn with and from each other in solving work-based problems. The fact that '... of a class of some 25 students on an HRD (MSc in HRD) course there were but half a dozen or so who had direct experience or knew something about action learning sets other than through the reading of the course literature' (Williams 1996: 261) is therefore surprising given that Revans began his work in 1946. Williams suggests that action learning sets have, up to this point, occupied a 'rather specialist place ... in organisation's management development programmes', but believes that this may change as action learning sets become more prevalent in postgraduate and post-experience courses.

At this point it is worth exploring what is meant by action learning, and reflecting upon why it appears to have occupied a 'specialist place' in organisations up to this time. One definition of Action Learning offered by McGill and Beaty is that it 'is a process of learning and reflection that happens with the support of a group or 'set' of colleagues working with real problems with the intention of getting things done' (McGill & Beaty 1992: 11). The focus on 'getting things done' infers that each problem has a solution, and that if we 'overcome the tendency to be passive toward the pressures of life and work' (ibid) we will be able to discover and implement that solution. It must be acknowledged at this point that McGill & Beaty's book is a guide to action learning only. As they point out in their first chapter, it is not the intention of their work to describe the theory of action learning. Rather their concern is to provide a guide to those 'who

wish to introduce the idea to their colleagues and for those who wish to take part in action learning for effective personal learning and development' (ibid). Whilst recognising the authors' intentions in producing their work, I believe it is still legitimate to address the place such a work has within the HRD field. To return to the conceptual thread of this paper outlined above, in what way does this text contribute to a view which perceives humans as *becomings* as opposed to beings?

If we acknowledge that part of the action learning philosophy is getting things done, the question then arises as to how these things 'get done'. McGill & Beaty view the action learning process as one which enables managers (following Pedler et al (1991), they take a broad definition of managers and include within it people who take responsibility for their lives), to develop and effect personal change. It is thus a process, which enables and empowers managers to engage with the complexities of their work and roles. They also view action learning as a social process - learners are not learning by themselves but with others. As such, action learning 'encourages set members to take responsibility for their world, which with the social element of action learning enables the set member as manager to empower herself' (ibid: 184). If we take two of the main elements of McGill & Beaty's definition of action learning: getting things done, and empowering managers; ostensibly it is a process that equips managers (here I am adopting the authors' broad definition of managers), to be able to survive relatively healthily within organisations. The welfare and interests of the individual appear paramount within this definition in that action learning encourages him/her to become an autonomous and dynamic entity within an organisation. In empowering managers therefore, action learning would appear to acknowledge individuals' continuous evolvement.

Nevertheless, another underlying assumption within McGill & Beaty's work, but one, which is made less explicit, is the link between the individual and the organisation. In terms of human *becomings*, action learning as outlined by them does not readily acknowledge that individual identity is shaped by events and processes outside the organisation as much as within the organisation. The individual-organisational link also raises the question as to how 'empowered' managers can be within organisations where they are required to 'get things done' ultimately to the benefit of the organisation. In cases where individuals feel their values or ethical concerns are being compromised, the social element of action learning could lead to a degree of conformity concerning the 'rights and wrongs' of a particular situation. In other words, the pressure to 'get things done', alongside the dynamic social processes within an action learning set, could lead to an individual feeling pressurised to act in a way contrary to his/her own values. In addition, the emphasis upon the individual as located within the organisational space fails to acknowledge wider processes, which require consideration in a strategic vision of HRD. If we are to move beyond the reactive tendencies of traditional training and development interventions those involved in HRD must recognise that their actions need to take into account the emergent nature of strategy and its 'interactions within the organisation and *across* (my emphasis), its boundaries' (Fredericks & Stewart 1996: 103).

McGill & Beaty's guide to action learning possibly presents itself easily to theoretical criticisms because it is, in essence, a practical guide for practitioners on how to run action learning sets. In one sense my criticisms of it could be seen to constitute an example of the theoretician-practitioner divide. However, if we view action learning as a practical concept, there is nevertheless within the action learning literature a number of texts which develop a more in-depth theoretical justification for their use of action learning in specific contexts, and in so doing demonstrate the necessity for reflection in action. Lee et al's (1996a) text *Management Education in the New Europe*, immediately takes us beyond the internal organisational context through its title alone. The book describes and analyses the role of the authors in 'fostering management education in Central Europe since 1989' (ibid: 8). Whilst the editors are faculty within British and Dutch universities, the book includes contributions from the central European 'recipients' of the 'purveyors' of western management knowledge, thereby acknowledging them as 'active

participants in a debate' (ibid: 4). The book reflects the anxieties of those from the west in being viewed as 'experts' by their central European colleagues. Indeed, as the editors point out in their introduction, as contact between management educators from western and central Europe increased, they came to realise that 'Western management knowledge did not transplant easily to an environment where market share, competition and product quality were more or less alien concepts at the corporate level but operated ruthlessly at the level of the individual entrepreneur.' (ibid: 4). Given this level of complexity, the western authors adopted an action learning based approach to their programmes.

This geographical re-location of an educational concept developed in Britain requires the reader, with the authors, to reflect upon the potential for action learning to work as a strategic tool, thereby taking into consideration wider environmental processes operating outside the specific organisational space. Action learning has thus crossed the boundaries referred to by Fredericks and Stewart, and demonstrates its potential as a tool for reflective HRD practitioners.

What the experiences, and reflections upon these experiences, in Lee et al's text highlight is that whilst action learning is perceived to be an approach which 'empowers' managers to 'get things done', as Lee suggests (1996b), it 'leaves open the question of how much flexibility individuals have in taking action within their own culture, whilst under the implicit constraints and expectations placed upon them by a methodology and other participants who are coming from a different culture' (ibid: 253). Here Lee is referring to national culture, but is a consideration that is equally valid in terms of organisational culture. In a culture (whether this be a national or organisational culture), which has traditionally imparted decisions from the top, how can we be sure that individuals will be able to move away from this hierarchical approach to one which views that true development and change is best 'fostered by helping individuals to help themselves' (ibid: 253)? Connolly's (1996) account of his attempt to implement action learning sets with the hierarchical structure of the British police provides a good example of the problems associated in implementing action learning referred to by Lee. He formed an action learning set with police officers of the same rank (Inspector level) with the intent of working together on strategic issues relevant to Cumbria Constabulary. Whilst the sets met on a number of occasions, no 'action' appeared to be taken from one set meeting to the other. Connolly concluded that the hierarchical culture within the police was so strong, that his fellow police officers were unwilling to take initiative for actions in which they were required to consult those above them in the organisational structure. The suggestion is therefore, that in order to implement a methodology, which encourages 'individuals to help themselves' with a view to 'getting things done', requires 'strategic and structural change in the organisation' (ibid).

What both Connolly's and Lee's work demonstrates is that action learning as a methodology cannot be implemented without due consideration to broader strategic processes. Here we return to the necessity for HRD to be an interdisciplinary concept, whose roots stretch beyond functionalist training and development methodologies to encompass the concept of strategic HRD.

Strategic HRD

If some texts on action learning ignore the boundaries of individuals' power within organisational structures - even though McGill & Beaty (I use them as an example only), consider action learning to be empowering - we need to consider what other elements form the basis for HRD.

Indeed, if HRD is to contribute to the continued survival and growth of work organisations it needs, Fredericks and Stewart argue, to 'gain impact at a macro, organisation-wide level' (Fredericks & Stewart 1996: 101). To do so, they argue, it is necessary to take a strategic view of HRD, which is 'concerned with exposing, examining, questioning and challenging the nature and extent of (individual) action possibilities as a contribution to facilitating the continuous development of organisation capability to support long-term survival' (ibid: 118). Fredericks and

Stewart outline three 'critical concepts' that form the basis for their model of HRD: organisation design; organisation strategy and management/leadership style. The first of these concepts is organisation design, and in examining the role of design they argue that each of the prescriptions and analyses concerning the design of work organisations contains underlying assumptions about the author's/designer's views of social reality and human existence. The nature of these assumptions becomes critical when considering the structural arrangements of organisations (Fredericks & Stewart view prescriptions for organisation design as synonymous with prescriptions for organisation structure), as they govern the way individual members of an organisation relate to one another, often based on authority relations (Giddens 1979, 1989). Authority relations 'have the effect of setting limits, or constraining, the actions and behaviour or individual organisation members ... and are maintained by the participation of individuals in those arrangements' (Fredericks & Stewart 1996: 103).

The second of Fredericks & Stewart's key concepts is organisation strategy. Whilst acknowledging the views of some authors (Knights & Morgan, 1990, 1991) that organisation strategy can be synonymous with organisation structure in its way as acting as a control mechanism of some organisation members to the benefit of others, their own view is that strategy 'is always 'realised'; that is strategy emerges over time as a 'stream of actions and interactions within the organisation and across its boundaries' (op cit). They subsequently define organisation strategy to be 'those organisation decisions and actions which are intended to and/or have an impact on the long-term survival of the organisation within its operating environment'.

The third key concept:management/leadership style recognises the role of the individual manager operating within the organisation. Its inclusion within their model of strategic HRD acknowledges that when we speak of 'organisation decisions what we really mean is management decisions' (ibid: 104). Therefore, management style impacts upon organisation strategy in that it is based on the beliefs and values held by individual managers.

Having established the foundational concepts for their model of strategic HRD, Fredericks & Stewart go on to elaborate this model by examining the relationships and connections between organisation structure and strategy, and subsequently the impact of management style on this relationship. Their distinction of management styles into two broad categories: styles based on a belief in conformance, and those based on a belief in enabling; creates a stronger focus on either strategy or structure. The authors take the view that neither style is better or more effective than the other, rather the appropriateness of either style is contingent upon the particular situation.

Without focussing directly upon Fredericks & Stewart's elucidation of their vision of strategic HRD, we can see that their work does begin to foster recognition of the notion of human *becomings*. The multiple identities of individuals within organisations, including the recognition that these identities are in part shaping, or becoming, outside the organisation is acknowledged in their discussion of their key concepts of organisation design, organisation strategy and management styles. The focus placed on management style in particular explicitly acknowledges that the way a manager conducts him/herself is based on his/her own values and beliefs. These values and beliefs are formed, at least partially, by national culture and the concomitant value base of each individual nation. The surfacing of these 'mental models' (Senge, 1990), and the acknowledgement of their influence upon organisations, begins to create a concept in which the diversity of human *becomings* is awarded a temporal, locational and emotional space.

Conclusion

The difficulty in writing a review of texts relevant to HRD in the UK is created by the interdisciplinary nature of the field, a feature which whilst creating difficulties for this particular author also constitutes its major strength. Through the exposition of the dilemmas I faced in constructing this review I hope to have demonstrated the complexity of issues faced by those involved in the HRD field. The theme of human *becomings* was adopted as a way to begin to

make sense of the multiplicity of individual identities - identities that require thoughtful and reflective acknowledgement by organisations in order that they become environmentally sustainable. The viability of organisations as sustainable entities was seen to require a strategic approach to HRD in which a number of key concepts need to be considered including: organisation design, organisation strategy and management/leadership style.

Whilst principally presented as a literature review, this paper is necessarily a subjective piece of work, which reveals my own biases as to what I think HRD *should* be. In stating this however, I wish to make clear that it is not my belief that I have the right to impose my views on others. Rather, that when any one individual makes a claim to knowledge it is a reflection of one of their identities, and that particular identity is itself in a process of *becoming*. Such processes require consideration from those involved in HRD, if HRD is also to remain in a process of *becoming* and create sustainable organisations in which people wish to work or become involved.

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